

“Improved development of current employees... will enhance workforce readiness and achieve safety, environmental, national security, and scientific goals for the years ahead.”

Secretary Richardson
Effectively Managing Training Resources”
March 4, 1999

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Department of Energy is committed to excellence in accomplishing its missions and in providing service to the American people. The purpose of this policy statement is to recognize that DOE employees are the most important assets to accomplishing our mission, and that a well-trained workforce—that continues to develop and learn—provides the agency greater efficiency and effectiveness in accomplishing our mission.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING POLICY

Continuous learning is one of the agency's highest priorities. Therefore, every employee will be provided appropriate continuous learning experiences with an annual goal of 40 hours for permanent, full-time employees.

Continuous learning includes the full range of opportunities to meet organizational and employee development needs. Now is a great opportunity to pilot the policy while the new Energy Online Learning Center is offering a wide variety of courses at no cost in FY2001.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Continuous learning enhances an individual employee's knowledge, skills and abilities to respond to increasing complexities of DOE missions and the need to work more closely with other agencies and the private sector. Providing good service requires technical excellence as well as excellence in priority-

setting, advocacy, presentation, management, and many other skills and abilities.

▲ MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS Managers and supervisors will provide the equivalent of 40 hours of continuous learning opportunities each year for each full-time employee. Identification of specific training needed will be accomplished through individual needs assessments and documented on employee Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

Learning experiences can take many forms, and may include classes or programs that have traditionally been emphasized as training opportunities, video-and/or audio-tape training, computer/web-based training, conferences and workshops, shadow assignments, self-study and, details to other positions and on-the-job training.

▲ SUPERVISORS AND EMPLOYEES The high standards of skill and knowledge for the workforce can only be attained through collaborative efforts between the employee and supervisor in an environment of continuous learning. Supervisors and employees are expected to work together to identify learning goals and development needs. Supervisors will assist in finding learning opportunities to meet identified needs, permitting time for learning, and providing opportunities for employees to apply new or enhanced skills on the job.

Supervisors are to ensure that selection and assignment for learning opportunities are done fairly. Employees will be responsible for diligently applying themselves in continuous learning situations, and for seeking opportunities to use new skills on the job. At a minimum, supervisors and employees are expected to discuss and plan for learning opportunities in conjunction with performance reviews.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ME-50 has established the continuous learning policy because it benefits the agency. By becoming a "continuous learning organization," ME-50 establishes itself as a leader in the field of training and employee development and in promoting professionalism. A well-trained workforce that continues to develop and learn provides the agency greater efficiency and effectiveness in addressing our mission. Organizational mobility and transferable skills are increased, because continuous learning opportunities provide a means to accommodate organization needs.

What is a "Continuous Learning" Experience?

Because the intent of the policy is to foster skill development and enhancement in order to address the agency's mission, continuous learning includes a full range of opportunities to meet organizational and employee development needs. This includes classes or programs that have traditionally been emphasized as training opportunities, and many other approaches to learning from sources inside and outside DOE, such as: seminars and workshops; on-the-job training; details; rotational assignments, cross-training; mentoring; video- and audio-tape training; on-line learning; college courses, etc.

Why is the Annual Goal 40 Hours?

Forty hours of annual training is becoming an industry standard for organizations that address workforce development, and in many cases, companies are setting much higher annual hourly requirements or goals. ME-50 will adopt the industry standard because it reflects the priority placed on continuous learning for the benefit of the organization, and it also reflects what is reasonably attainable based on internal office practice.

Is 40 Hours The Maximum? Does Mandatory Training Count in Meeting the Goal?

The goal is a minimum of 40 hours per year. Many DOE employees may already exceed 40 hours of training annually in order to keep up skills or certifications, but this does not foreclose additional opportunities for continuous learning.

Is the Goal of 40 Hours Per Year Now in Effect, or is this "Phased In?"

The 40 hours of continuous learning experience has been effective upon issuance of the policy statement. Managers may prorate the 40 hours for the first year but are encouraged to meet the 40-hour minimum, if at all possible. Examples of continuous learning opportunities include: seminars, conferences and workshops; on-the-job training; details; rotational assignments, and cross-training; on-line learning; coaching or mentoring sessions; video and audio tape training; self-study; college courses, etc.

What About Non-Permanent or Less-Than-Full-Time Employees?

Supervisors are expected to provide all employees with an appropriate continuous learning experience commensurate with their job responsibilities.

What is ME-50's Role in Expanding This Policy?

ME-50 encourages other offices to join them in implementing the Continuous Learning Policy. ME-50 can be a valuable asset in assisting participating offices in becoming a continuous learning organization, and a leader in promoting professionalism.

ME-50 specializes in identifying training needs and developing programs to address those needs, and can serve as a resource for training programs for assessing training needs. Employees and supervisors are encouraged to consider the array of courses and

programs offered by ME-50 delivered throughout the complex by the Washington Area Training and Employee Development Center and the Energy Online Learning Center. These courses are offered by a variety of means, e.g., CD-ROMs, web-based, satellite broadcasting, the Internet and classrooms.

What is Required for Documentation or Tracking?

Annual training hours should be documented in training plans and IDPs. ME-50 will keep reporting requirements to a minimum. Completed training is best reported in employee history files in CHRIS.

How Will Implementation of this Policy be Funded?

No new funds are required for implementation of this policy. Many of the continuous learning approaches require little or no funding to implement. Because continuous learning is an agency priority, providing for opportunities needs to be addressed and budgeted for within available funds.



ME-50 CONTINUOUS LEARNING POLICY

Setting the standard for organizational excellence



"Training Today For Tomorrow's Needs..."